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Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*) (A/65/89, A/65/307 and A/65/336)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/65/168 and A/65/174)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/65/173)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/65/157 and A/65/158)

(d) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/65/172)

1. **Mr. Kim** Bonghyun (Republic of Korea) said that the fifteenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development provided the opportunity to assess progress in social development and identify gaps. He noted with great appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/65/168).

2. There were strong linkages between poverty and social exclusion. Increased access to education, job creation and decent work opportunities were thus essential. Related policies must be implemented comprehensively, targeting socially vulnerable groups.

3. Persons with disabilities must receive particular attention. There was potential for the disability community to participate in shaping the global development agenda for 2015 and beyond. In an effort to mainstream the disability perspective in development programmes, the Government of the Republic of Korea had developed its official development assistance policy keeping persons with disabilities particularly in mind. The Government had provided rehabilitation services to the disabled poor in Viet Nam in 2009, in cooperation with a non-governmental organization. It also ran a rehabilitation, social integration and self-reliance programme in Cambodia.

4. The population of the Republic of Korea and other countries in Asia was ageing very rapidly. The Government had introduced measures to ensure that the elderly were treated with dignity. A pension plan for the elderly had been introduced in 2008, and job centres promoted the employment of older persons and provided them with free job placement services. The Government continued to do its utmost to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

5. **Ms. Kang** Yeong Jung (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that it was the responsibility of every nation to give young people as many opportunities as possible to participate in society. Her Government had advanced youth participation in decision-making and social integration and the Ministry of Women and Family organized youth conferences to encourage youth discussion and participation in Government policymaking.

6. Communications technology enabled more young people to participate in decision-making and social integration. Online communities had formed on Facebook and in other forums, enabling people to express their views freely on various policies and providing youth with opportunities to connect with each other. There should be more coordination between youth leaders through online channels. That would encourage far greater youth participation and make them realize the value of their participation. Global organizations such as the United Nations should continue to provide youth with opportunities to exchange views on matters related to decision-making.

7. **Ms. Leveaux** (Sweden) said that her country fully aligned itself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

8. **Mr. König** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he represented 76 Swedish youth organizations with over 500,000 members.

9. Inequality and discrimination were root causes of exclusion, unemployment and health problems that must be addressed by decision makers. The organization of which he was president, the National Youth Organization for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth, worked to address challenges related to sexual orientation and gender identity and to create space for everyone in society to be themselves and explore their identities and dreams.

10. Gender norms, heterosexual norms and norms of physical ability affected everyone in society, both those who conformed to them and those who did not. Young people who did not conform to such norms faced additional discrimination. It was necessary to move beyond tolerance to a situation in which all people were equals and no one had to obtain permission to exist.

11. Young persons with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identities were bullied in school and experienced domestic violence and discrimination in the health-care system. Such circumstances could lead to depression, anxiety, homelessness or suicide attempts.

12. The work of his organization and others like it changed the lives of young people by holding events, such as summer camps, which gave them the opportunity to be open about their hopes, fears, dreams and past experiences. That enabled them to tackle discrimination, turn challenges into advantages and participate fully in society.

13. New technologies sped up interaction between young people around the world. Information about human rights violations spread quickly, enabling people to take a stand immediately, no matter where they lived. Many such violations passed without notice, forcing people into exclusion, poverty, unemployment, criminality and causing decreased life expectancy and reduced access to education.

14. Governments must acknowledge the Yogyakarta Principles, which stated that human rights were for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Hate crimes against transgender people sometimes supported by the State, were a serious issue.

15. Governments must challenge gender and sexuality stereotypes, and provide young people with access to comprehensive sexuality education, including information on sexual orientation and identity issues and contraceptive methods. They must also guarantee safe schools, free from discrimination and violence.

16. Governments must realize that youth civil society must be involved if the challenges facing the world were to be addressed. Any measures which did not involve youth risked irrelevance, inefficiency and illegitimacy.

17. **Ms. Awad-Hassan** (Sudan) said that Progress towards achieving social development had been severely hampered by climate change and by the multiple crises that had affected the world in recent years. International efforts must therefore be redoubled in order to achieve the goals of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. Social development could not be achieved through economic growth alone. The Government of Sudan was striving to remove all obstacles which impeded social integration and was working to end conflicts, achieve peace and security, foster economic growth and ensure that people were effective actors at the heart of social development.

18. In building a safe and stable society for all, peace was a fundamental element. To that end, the Government of Sudan had signed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and, through its endeavours to resolve conflicts and establish peace, was striving to find comprehensive solutions to Sudan's economic and social problems and achieve social integration. Sudan was also striving to strengthen political and civil rights and widen participation in the decision-making process. Moreover, the 2011 plebiscite would enable people in the south to decide their future.

19. Sudan had formulated a national plan to combat poverty and had set aside 31.45 million Sudanese pounds to fund projects to assist graduates, since development could not be achieved without considering young people. Sudan had, moreover, increased salaries, widened the scope of basic and higher education and was working to eliminate illiteracy. Sudan was also working to improve health care and sanitation, improve the environment and achieve food security and had drawn up the 25-Year National Strategy (2007-2031) with a view to achieving social and economic development. Funding earmarked for poverty alleviation had been increased to 9 per cent of GDP in 2009. Moreover commercial banks had increased funding to small projects.

20. Islamic charities were at the forefront of those institutions working to achieve social justice in Sudan. Those charities had disbursed approximately $200 million annually and had provided assistance to almost two million families in 2009. Basic education was compulsory and free of charge in accordance with the 2005 Interim Constitution and the 25-Year National Strategy. Sudan had also formulated a national strategy for girls' education.

21. In 2009, the national social security fund had seen its revenue increase by 26 per cent and social security expenditure had risen by 64 per cent. Funding had also been provided for social investment.

22. Sudan was working to implement policies to facilitate the mobility of disabled people and integrate them into society and had also drawn up a national policy for the empowerment of women which aimed to increase women's participation in all social and political spheres and further their involvement in peacebuilding activities. Pursuant to the National Elections Act, at least 25 per cent of seats in Parliament and in state legislative assemblies were held by women. Sudan was also striving to eliminate gender inequality in education. Legislation had been strengthened to combat violence against women and women were prioritized in poverty alleviation initiatives.

23. In the light of recurring global crises, States must work together to implement the outcomes of social development summits. Moreover, the international community needed to redouble its efforts to address the plight of those suffering under occupation in Palestine, the Golan Heights and all occupied Arab land.

24. **Mr. Benítez Versón** (Cuba) said that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals remained a chimera for most countries, given the unjust and unsustainable nature of the international economic and political order. Moreover, it was alarming that the countries affected the most by the financial, food and energy crises were those least responsible for them. While the inequality gap continued to widen, enormous amounts of money were squandered on military expenditures and illegal drugs. Noting that the commitment of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for official development assistance was not being met, he wondered why the funds allocated to bailing out banks and speculators should not instead be used to assist developing countries.

25. In his country, almost all the Goals had been achieved, and some benchmarks had even been exceeded. Since 1959, social and economic transformations had been undertaken in order to build a society based on social justice and solidarity, in spite of the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba for over fifty years, the devastating impact of powerful hurricanes and the current world crises.

26. His country's infant mortality rate was among the lowest in the world, illiteracy had been eradicated and life expectancy was higher than that of many developed countries. Over two thirds of the State budget was allocated to social development and scientific and technical research. Furthermore, Cuba had shared its modest resources with other Third World nations, having implemented cooperation programmes in over 150 countries without exclusion or conditions. In that connection, the Cuban literacy campaign "Yes, I can" had guaranteed the literacy of thousands of people worldwide. Cuba would continue to work with others and share its primary resource, namely, the human capital created by the Revolution, motivated by the principles of solidarity and social justice, in order to achieve the better world hoped for by all.

27. **Ms. Morgan Sotomayor** (Mexico) said that her country's social development policy centred on expanding people's options, liberties and capacities so as to enable them to participate fully in society and have a say in decisions that affected their lives. A solid institutional and legal framework had been established to implement that policy, and by law social expenditure could not fall below a certain threshold. In that context, her Government's "Vivir Mejor" strategy entailed measures targeting improvements in health, nutrition, education, housing and social infrastructure. Moreover, universal health care would be achieved in 2012.

28. Welcoming the General Assembly's decision to declare 2012 the International Year of Youth, Mexico called for redoubled efforts to implement the objectives of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and its 2005 supplement, in addition to identifying new challenges and opportunities for the young. Furthermore, a youth-centred approach to the Millennium Development Goals was essential if lasting results were to be achieved. With that in mind, her Government had organized the World Youth Conference earlier that year, attended by high-level representatives from over 100 countries.

29. With regard to persons with disabilities, their effective integration into society unfortunately had not yet been realized, despite the inroads made in promotion and protection of their rights since the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities. She welcomed the ongoing effort by the United Nations system to strengthen its activities on their behalf by the increasing incorporation of the disability perspective into the agenda of various multilateral forums. Mexico would continue to promote such steps towards cross-cutting, system-wide inclusion of issues affecting persons with disabilities, with a view to transforming the principles enshrined in the Convention into a tangible reality in the lives of millions worldwide.

30. **Mr. Sellos** (Brazil) said that in recent years Brazil had made significant strides towards a more equitable development model combining sustained economic growth with poverty reduction and social inclusion. Begun in 2003, its *Bolsa Familia* programme currently provided more than 12 million poor families with conditional monthly subsidies that encouraged school attendance and post- and antenatal care. Since its inception, the programme had improved the economic status of over 50 million people. Another programme paid a guaranteed income to older or disabled persons in households earning less than a quarter of the minimum wage and provided social and health assistance to those in need.

31. Brazil's youth population was one of the largest in the world. To address the problems of high unemployment and violent death among youth, Brazil had instituted a programme that gave young people a monthly subsidy to ensure that they finished their primary education, learned a profession and found employment. The programme was being expanded to enrol at least 3 million young people by year-end.

32. However, Brazil's demographics were changing. Persons aged 60 and older already constituted 11 per cent of the population, and by 2025 they would account for 36 per cent. Brazil shared the view that an international instrument on the human rights of older persons was needed to support national efforts to meet the challenges of an ageing population.

33. As the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report (A/65/168), the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action remained elusive, despite some advances. Developed countries must live up to their commitments and provide additional resources to developing countries, especially the most vulnerable. The promotion of development was a collective responsibility.

34. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) said that it was important to continue to implement the international recommendations on ageing contained in the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the Madrid Plan of Action, the 2007 Brasilia Declaration and the agreements reached during the third follow-up meeting on the Brasilia Declaration. Chile welcomed the Secretary-General's reports on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/65/157 and A/65/158). These reports noted two initiatives that Chile supported and would work to advance: efforts in Latin America to bring about a convention on the rights of older persons and advocacy for the appointment of a special rapporteur on the rights of older persons.

35. While insufficient in themselves, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities could be applied to older women and persons with disabilities. The planned high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and the World Health Organization's recently published report *Mental Health and Development* also had the potential to help older persons, many of whom suffered from chronic physical and mental illness.

36. Chile had instituted a series of initiatives in 2010 to address the problems of its own ageing population: an elder care services programme; a telephone service focusing on older adults; a fund to provide money for projects developed by older persons' organizations and a programme to provide support to isolated elderly and their caregivers. It had also published its first national report on the status of dependent older persons and was providing counselling for the elderly affected by the recent earthquake. However, its most important accomplishment in that field had been the enactment of a national law prohibiting the mistreatment of older adults and amending the Family Violence Act, the Family Courts Act and the Penal Code. For the first time, older persons had a specific status under the law.

37. **Ms. van de Loo** (the Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, although the General Assembly had recently adopted a resolution which declared that access to clean water and sanitation was a fundamental human right, 2.6 billion people still lacked access to sanitation. Every year 3.5 million people died of waterborne illnesses; diarrhoea was the second most common cause of death among children under the age of five. It was estimated that within 40 years, as many

as 2 billion people would lack access to clean water. Lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation was a major obstacle to the health of young people worldwide. The 2006 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report had stated that "the scarcity at the heart of the global water crisis is rooted in power, poverty and inequality, not in physical availability". Governments must strive to realize the right to water and sanitation for everyone and must focus on those individuals and groups that have traditionally faced difficulties.

38. In most developing countries, women were responsible for water management at the domestic and community levels. Every day women spent more than 200 million hours collecting and transporting water for domestic use. Such work caused women physical harm and impeded their involvement in such activities as education, income generation, leisure and recreation, since the time women spent securing water made it difficult for them to participate in decision-making.

39. Investment was required to ensure equitable access for all people to clean, affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation. States must strive to realize the Millennium Development Goals and reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

40. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the three major goals of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, namely to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment and achieve social integration, remained the key priority areas of social development. However, very limited progress had been achieved in that regard on the global level. The gap between rich and poor was widening at an alarming pace and young people faced unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, addiction and disappointment. The ongoing global economic and financial crises had had serious consequences for social development and were undoing progress already achieved. Unemployment gave rise to poverty and social exclusion while full employment and decent work were important means to achieve social integration and poverty alleviation.

41. Respect for the well-being of older persons was deeply rooted in Iranian culture and was guaranteed by laws and regulations. The Social Security Organization and the Iranian Ministry of Welfare and Social Security were working in collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement the three priority directions contained in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Social Security Organization has also initiated a plan to provide older persons with a wide range of health-care services. Furthermore, the Iranian Research Centre on Ageing carried out research on the social and psychological needs of older persons.

42. Protecting persons with disabilities was also a fundamental policy for Iran. Comprehensive legislation to protect the disabled has been adopted in 2004. Furthermore, Iran had played an active role in the preparation and adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had become a party to that convention in 2009.

43. **Ms. Hadid** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, through her five-month listening tour of Australia's indigenous lands and her participation in its youth-driven Make Poverty History Road Trip, she had dedicated her voice to the plight of indigenous youth, who were the world's most vulnerable young people. Australia's indigenous people lived in poverty, with limited access to education and health care. They were therefore at higher risk for infant mortality, criminal behaviour and other problems than the general population. She, like many others of her generation, was proud that, in 2008, the Australian Government had formally apologized to the Stolen Generation. The Australian Government had also endorsed the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and had committed resources to closing gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Young Australians were united in the belief that these gaps could be closed in their lifetimes. They played a strong role in civil society and were actively involved in promoting human rights nationally and internationally.

44. As a member of Australia's Arab Muslim minority, she was all too well aware of racism and intolerance, but she also knew her country's capacity to value diversity and multiculturalism. Many children grew up without the opportunity that she had enjoyed to feel connected to their communities and hopeful for the future. Their plight would not change without the meaningful participation and voice of young people at the international level. It would be a start if all of the Member States of the United Nations could embrace its youth delegate programme. When the children of her generation looked back, she hoped that they would recall a time when the global community stepped up to

its challenges and reclaimed the promise of the United Nations.

45. **Ms. Ploder** (Austria) said that Austria aligned itself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

46. **Ms. El Batnigi** (Austria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that approaches to youth policy needed to be cross-sectorial as there was no political area that did not affect young people. Education and participation were crucial for young persons' social development; in both industrial and developing countries, education was one of the most powerful ways to break the poverty cycle.

47. Education meant empowerment, especially for girls and young women. Equitable access for all children to education was crucial in safeguarding their social and economic development as well as the development of their societies. Education was the key to unleashing the potential and talents of children and improving young people's employment opportunities and income potential. Education thus benefited individuals and the country in which they lived. Insufficient access to education perpetuated poverty. In turn, poverty limited access to schooling as poor families often could not afford to send their children to school. Investing in education could have a catalytic effect on health, nutrition, the environment and community participation and could help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

48. Young people must be involved in decision-making, as equal partners with other stakeholders in the political process. The core principles of participation for young people were co-decision, self-determination and self-government. Participation promoted informal learning opportunities, social inclusion and improved planning processes and decision-making. Boys and girls, including the disadvantaged, must be allowed to participate on an equal footing. All countries must work to realize youth rights worldwide and the number of youth delegates, who were experts in their fields, must also be increased.

49. **Ms. Sæbones** (Norway) said that Norway had been one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its ratification was expected as soon as a new act on legal competence and guardianship entered into force. Furthermore, on 1 January 2009, its Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act had entered into force, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability.

50. The Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved if the needs of disabled people were not addressed. However the Secretary-General's report A/65/173 had concluded that Millennium Development Goal policies and programmes had not specifically included persons with disabilities. They were at a disadvantage when accessing information and health services and suffered higher child mortality. Moreover, at a global level, approximately one third of children who did not attend school were children with disabilities. It was therefore imperative that the Education for All: Fast-track Initiative, which aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2015, must ensure their inclusion. Norway had adopted a policy to mainstream disability in all development cooperation programmes and persons with disabilities must be actively involved in their planning and implementation.

51. **Mr. Malnes** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that in order to improve societies and strengthen democracy and the role of civil society, citizen participation in shaping society was essential. Young people must be involved in the dialogue between governments and civil society and must be part of the decision-making process. However, despite the recognition of the rights of children, children and young people were seldom meaningfully consulted and involved in matters that affected them.

52. Many youth organizations that were engaged in defending human rights were impeded from carrying out their activities. It was deplorable that, as revealed in the 2010 report by UNESCO entitled "Education under Attack", threats and attacks against schoolchildren and students were on the rise, and often occurred because those children and students had expressed critical opinions or participated in public debate. In many countries young people who participated in student organizations were intimidated and silenced by death threats and were subject to violence, arbitrary detention and punishment; some had even been killed. All attacks on education must be met with an international response, including financial and technical assistance to support young people's civic engagement.

53. It was of great concern that homosexuality was illegal in more than 80 countries. Members of organizations fighting for the rights of lesbian, gay,

bisexual and transgender young people were at particular risk and suffered stigmatization, exclusion from education and harassment. The right to freedom of association must also apply to organizations that expressed political or religious views that conflicted with government policy or the majority of society.

54. Despite the fact that the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child were recognized by almost all countries, the principles and ambitions of that convention were far from being fully implemented. The work undertaken by the Human Rights Council to ensure effective monitoring of that convention and to reinforce its implementation both by national governments and at the international level was to be commended.

55. **Mr. Bui** The Giang (Viet Nam) said that despite optimism that poverty could still be halved by 2015, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, and despite the absence of massive food shortages, global economic and financial turmoil had combined with the food and energy crisis to deal disastrous blows to all socially vulnerable groups, among whom undernourishment and poverty were on the rise. The goal of a society for all had become even more difficult to achieve.

56. His delegation shared the Secretary-General's view that policies to achieve the three pillars of social development must be implemented in parallel. It agreed with the general principles for the promotion of social integration and the human rights framework contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/168). It also supported recommendations for actions at the national and international levels. However, developed countries should be added to the list of entities that should provide debt relief, concessionary aid and grants to support national efforts to enhance fiscal space. In that connection, it remained imperative for countries to honour their official development assistance commitments.

57. In the past year, Viet Nam had implemented a series of measures to address the economic and social impact of the global economic and financial crisis, including a number of fiscal stimulus packages and social protection schemes, such as low-cost loans for the nation's poorest to encourage trade and production in rural areas. As a result, for the first eight months of 2010, Viet Nam had experienced a growth rate of more than 6 per cent and export growth of almost 20 per cent. Direct foreign investment continued to increase, and more than 300 thousand jobs had been created.

58. A greater effort must be made to ensure concerted implementation of the three pillars of social development. Viet Nam stood ready to do its part, but it needed more effective cooperation from other countries, in which the United Nations should play a key role.

59. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, fifteen years after the World Summit for Social Development, many States remained indifferent to the commitments they had made with regard to poverty eradication, social integration and the creation of productive employment. The financial and economic crisis had only worsened inequality and poverty in both developed and developing countries, demonstrating the failure of the global capitalist system. According to the World Bank, the crisis had pushed 10 million people into poverty in Latin America alone.

60. The dominance of market interests hampered social justice and human development. Adjustments to the labour market and provision of health insurance by private companies took precedence over fulfilment of the rights to work and health. Similarly, in the context of the international market, food was defined as an object of speculation rather than a basic need. States had been forced to reduce their investment in social programmes owing to the absurd conditions of the loans offered by the Bretton Woods institutions, leading to protests and social instability in many countries, including in the very icons of the capitalist model. Over one billion people were living in extreme poverty, and, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the number of unemployed had increased by 34 million between 2007 and 2009. It was clear that to truly reduce hunger and inequality and provide decent work, development models required a more humanist approach. That included equitable distribution of economic gains; strong social protection systems; social inclusion policies that were tailored to the reality of each country and developed through a participatory process; capacity-building in communities; empowerment of women; and guaranteeing equal opportunities for marginalized populations.

61. Under the forthcoming leadership of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Commission for Social Development would be prioritizing poverty

eradication. His country's experience in that area, including the near realization of all of the Millennium Development Goals, could serve as an incentive and example in the Commission's discussions. The Government had dedicated 60 per cent of national fiscal revenue to social investment with a view to providing a universal social security system. The Bolivarian Government's social missions had reduced poverty rates quickly and on a massive scale, from 49 per cent in 1998 to 24 per cent in 2009, while unemployment had fallen from 15 per cent to 7 per cent in the same period.

62. Community participation was critical to the Venezuelan Government. An inclusive democracy was constitutionally mandated, which implied the participation of all citizens in the planning and implementation of public programmes and policies. The recent parliamentary elections had had a historically high turn-out, demonstrating the vigorous nature of the country's democracy. The participatory approach to governing would be a key component in reaching the morally compulsory commitments.

63. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that individual people were the basis for achieving sustainable social development. Qatar had therefore established institutional mechanisms to address the challenges faced by various groups within society and had drawn up the Qatar National Vision 2030 with a view to realizing the Millennium Development Goals. That vision rested on four pillars, the second of which called for social development, which would safeguard and support families, promote the role of women in society and encourage women's participation in economic and political decision-making. To that end, Qatar was formulating its first National Development Strategy, 2010-2015.

64. Qatar had already achieved much to promote the individual and the family. Research had been carried out on economically marginalized groups in society and a draft strategy on the family had been formulated. Qatar had also hosted numerous regional and international conferences to address various development issues including social development. To promote its National Vision 2030, Qatar had, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society organizations, implemented initiatives to foster social development nationwide. To achieve economic and social development, the principle of social responsibility remained paramount. To that end, Qatar had hosted several conferences focusing on the principle of social responsibility, including corporate social responsibility.

65. **Mr. Sammis** (United States of America) said that the United States of America had made advancements in the areas of disability, ageing, education, job promotion and health-care reform, in fulfilment of the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development. The advocacy of persons with disabilities had led to the establishment of community-based independent living centres across the country, many of which received support from the Department of Education in the form of skills training and systems advocacy. Families of children with disabilities also received extensive support.

66. The United States was the world's largest bilateral donor to the education sector, promoting access to education for all children and schooling that was relevant to the changing global job market. Development assistance had focused on creating low-cost assessment tools to promote early literacy and numeracy and expanding partnerships between universities in the United States and those in developing countries in order to produce innovations in support of economic and social development.

67. The 1.5 billion young people in the world, most of them in the developing world, were seen as partners, leaders and innovators in finding solutions to global challenges, including terrorism, climate change, human rights, gender equity, education, food security and global health. The Department of State had launched a youth task force to ensure that United States policies included and empowered youth in that task. Assistance programmes in dozens of countries aimed at providing young people with the resources to live healthy and productive lives.

68. Earlier that year, the Secretary of Labour had hosted the first-ever meeting of labour ministers from the Group of 20 to discuss the effects of the recent economic crisis on employment and to share policies undertaken to create jobs and assist the unemployed. The ministers had agreed on and presented a set of recommendations focused on accelerating job creation; strengthening social protection systems; promoting inclusive labour policies; improving the quality of jobs; and preparing the workforce for future challenges.

69. Protection and support for the elderly in the United States was provided through the Department of Health and Human Services, whose strategic action plan emphasized empowering the elderly to make informed decisions about long-term help; provision of home- and community-based services; and prevention of the abuse and neglect of the elderly.

70. The United States had taken an historic leap forward on health-care reform with the passage of an act that eliminated some of the practices most detrimental to employers and employees. The act reduced health insurance premiums, brought down the cost of health insurance for small businesses and retirees and prevented insurance companies from refusing coverage to children and others with pre-existing conditions.

71. **Ms. Shinohara** (Japan) said that although significant progress had been achieved in protecting vulnerable social groups, all Member States still needed to strengthen their efforts to build inclusive societies that respected diversity and in which all individuals could participate. Given that one fifth of the population in Japan was over the age of 65, the Government had taken measures to ensure its population could live safe and fulfilled lives. Specifically, a law had been adopted to facilitate a broader range of lifestyle choices for the elderly through provision of assistance for independent living, strengthening of intergenerational cooperation and promoting their participation in the community.

72. A Government committee on disability policy reform had been launched and review of the existing system had begun. Japan was also working to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as soon as possible. At the regional level, the Government was cooperating in removing barriers for persons with disabilities through activities under the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

73. A law had recently been enacted mandating comprehensive assistance to children and young people in Japan in response to the situation of irregular employment, severe unemployment and economic disparity being faced. Under the new legislation, programmes were planned on education, welfare and employment to promote young people's inclusion in society.

74. The concept of "a society for all" complemented Japan's human security approach, which focused on empowering and building the capacity of individuals in order to promote their participation.

75. **Mr. Tarabzoni** (Saudi Arabia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the issues under discussion should be given particular attention in view of the recent launch of the International Year of Youth. The international community had been late in coming to the realization that social issues were the backbone of development. Access to education and a healthy environment transformed children into global change makers. Youth delegates from several countries had already begun to collaborate in the goal of making a positive change. The world had become smaller than ever. The Internet and new media offered networks that could transform local opportunities into large-scale success stories. The major successes of business enterprises and charity foundations had started as lofty dreams in university campuses and gatherings of friends, demonstrating that the vision of social development for a better world was possible.

76. Youth made up over 60 per cent of the population in Saudi Arabia, and many efforts were being made to engage them in Government initiatives. A centre had been established to promote young people's ideas and involvement in decision-making, while Saudi students were contributing to international aid efforts, including rescue operations in Pakistan. Students were also an important part of the Government's inter-faith dialogue initiative to end false stereotypes and had recently participated in a forum with students in China.

77. The United Nations World Youth Report was an essential tool for measuring the progress of youth involvement around the world. As future leaders, young people would be striving to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals remained a priority in their countries.

78. **Mr. Elshakshuki** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the negative repercussions of the global financial and economic crises on developing countries had effectively prevented those countries from meeting the commitments made in respect of sustainable development. Moreover, developed countries had failed to take proactive measures to assist the developing world in meeting the needs of its peoples, hence the absence of tangible progress in reducing poverty, unemployment and infectious diseases.

79. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya called for strengthened international cooperation in the provision of official development assistance and reduction of the debt burden on developing countries, in particular African countries. It also urged developed countries to translate their political promises into tangible measures.

80. As signatory to a number of international instruments relating to sustainable development, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had adopted several policies to that end. With regard to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1, for instance, his Government had adopted legislation establishing a number of social welfare programmes in order to guarantee an adequate living standard for all its citizens, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable populations such as widows, orphans, the elderly and the destitute. Studies had demonstrated that there were no families suffering from extreme poverty or hunger in his country, although economic situations did vary from household to household. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was taking concrete measures to address existing weaknesses and confront challenges in that regard, including the provision of financial benefits for needy families.

81. With regard to education, the law stipulated that schooling — compulsory through the preparatory stage — was the right and duty of all Libyans. His Government was working to complement technical and scientific development in that area by further strengthening the educational infrastructure and supporting civil education. Free primary health-care services available to the entire population had led to the eradication of a number of diseases, including malaria and polio.

82. His Government acknowledged the important role of persons with disabilities in society. In that connection, a national council for the rights of persons with disabilities was responsible for adopting legislation and improving the services offered. Furthermore, an office for the education of special groups had been created in order to implement the national project for social integration. Lastly, awareness-raising initiatives on the concept of disability and possibilities for integration had been undertaken in schools and universities.

83. Under the national project for social integration, a number of laws had been adopted concerning the rights of women, children, the elderly and persons with special needs, among them a recent amendment to legislation adopted in 1999 that provided for care for all categories of persons with special needs, including orphans and divorced women. Laws protecting the rights of the elderly included provisions that ensured their right to receive care and a basic pension while remaining within their families. In addition, those elderly persons unable to remain in the family household were offered the option of residence in special care centres in which health, social and psychological services were provided.

84. **Ms. Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that the current Government had facilitated the first steps towards eradicating poverty in Nicaragua through support for agricultural production and small and medium-sized business; provision of access to fair credit, seeds and fertilizers; and prioritizing direct economic support for women working in the informal sectors in both urban and rural areas. The neo-liberal policies of deregulation, privatization and restriction of the State promoted by past administrations had been replaced with policies that restored the exercise of the rights to free education and health, subsidized public transport, water and electricity, and strengthened the State's role in redistributing resources to assist the poor. Studies supported by the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had found that Nicaragua had reached Millennium Development Goal 1 by reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger. Furthermore, based on a successful Cuban model, illiteracy had been reduced from 22 per cent to 3 per cent, while deaths by malaria had been eradicated. Exports had increased by 30 per cent in the past year, providing a basis for the sustainability of those advancements.

85. Specific actions to eradicate child malnutrition and extreme poverty included a policy that provided agricultural producers of all sizes with services to increase production of basic food crops in a sustainable manner, food subsidies and microcredit to women and food security among children in primary schools and childcare centres. In addition, with the support of Cuba, a national survey was being conducted to identify and assist persons with disabilities.

86. Migration was a global issue that required dialogue and international cooperation. States were obligated to protect the human rights of all migrants,

and her delegation thus condemned all actions that criminalized migration. The best way to stem migration was to assist poor countries in providing adequate employment, in particular those that had been exploited and looted of their resources by countries where wealth was now concentrated. Nicaragua's progress towards social development was fundamentally due to its participation in the Bolivarian alliance, which was a source of unity, integration and complementarity in the Americas.

87. **Ms. Panomwon Na Ayutthaya** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that global insufficiency in an interconnected world accounted for the paradox of significant industrial productivity and famine and poverty existing side by side, but such interconnectedness could also be used to create a sufficient economy for the future. As she understood it, sufficiency should allow human beings to lead a comfortable life, without overindulgence in luxury, as excess could better be employed to meet the basic needs of many. By contrast, the current structure of the financial economy would impede both material subsistence with dignity and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The concept of a sufficiency economy championed by her Government, while not necessarily attractive in market terms, would ensure that basic needs were met, an approach that would prove useful in addressing education, health care, use of natural resources and, most important, decisions in daily life. Such an approach would, in turn, help create a more fulfilled and less troubled world.

88. **Ms. Rupavijetra** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that support for youth participation in decision-making processes was a sign of recognition of the significant contribution young people could make. For instance, youth could help put an end to the cycle of poverty if strategic investments were made in education. Indeed, youth development through education had been among her country's top priorities over the previous decade, as demonstrated by its policy of sponsoring free 15-year education for all and its expansion of financial aid for vocational and higher education. Thailand had also ensured greater access to education and social acceptance for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, as it held the view that members of those groups had the potential to become an important force for progress towards building a society for all.

89. Despite progress in promoting youth participation in development, many youths around the world remained, sadly, ignorant of their power to shape the future. Greater awareness of that capacity and of issues of common concern to humanity must therefore be promoted among the young, in order to encourage them to help address those needs.

90. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino) said that the economic and financial crises had undermined the prospects of reducing poverty, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, inequality and social exclusion; indeed, it could take several years to recover the ground lost in the fight against poverty. By co-sponsoring a number of General Assembly resolutions relating to social development, his Government had reaffirmed its commitment to eradicate poverty, foster social integration and promote and protect human rights, in particular those of vulnerable groups like the ageing. Recognizing the valuable contribution of the elderly in terms of experience and culture, San Marino had taken a number of measures aimed at their complete integration into society, including the adoption of a charter on their rights in 2008.

91. San Marino paid special attention to the family unit as the basic building block of society, and it had adopted legislation that provided social incentives for family development. His Government had also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2008, and established a committee to promote inclusion, in addition to the laws and initiatives existing since 1991 to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

92. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) said that, 15 years after the World Summit for Social Development, the international community continued to reaffirm its emphasis on people-centred development. It had taken important steps to achieve internationally agreed targets, such as adopting the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the World Programme of Action for Youth. However, progress to date was insufficient. Moreover, it was endangered by the impact of the ongoing energy, food, and economic and financial crises and by climate change, which had combined to weaken social protection mechanisms and bring about a rise in poverty. Thus, his delegation agreed with the analysis in the Secretary-General's report (A/65/168), as well as with the conclusions of

the high-level panel discussion held during the Commission for Social Development's forty-eighth session.

93. African leaders, who were grappling as well with rising unemployment and continuing pandemics, had adopted a number of important documents on combating poverty and unemployment at the fifteenth African Union summit in July 2010.

94. Owing to the stabilization of macroeconomic parameters and to government social assistance programmes, Algeria had made progress in the area of social development. State spending to assist disadvantaged groups — specifically, persons with disabilities, indigent older adults, orphans, at-risk youth, hardship cases and the needy — represented almost 12 per cent of GDP. It took such forms as direct payments to disabled persons, institutionalization of orphans, at-risk youth and indigent older persons, and labour-intensive public works projects. Unemployment had dropped from around 15 per cent in 2005 to just over 10 per cent in 2009.

95. Algeria's next five-year programme would continue to make social development a priority. To combat unemployment, it set aside significant sums for creating jobs for persons with university degrees and for supporting the establishment of microenterprises. It also funded the construction of housing to replace substandard dwellings in rural areas.

96. **Mr. Rakovskiy** (Russian Federation) said that the unity of purpose demonstrated by Member States at the recent Summit on the Millennium Development Goals was welcome. The decisions of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg continued to be of defining importance for countries' activities in the field of social development, as indicated by the holding of the High-Level Panel Discussion in Commemoration of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development during the forty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development.

97. The Commission for Social Development should remain an effective coordinator of international cooperation on ageing, support for youth, strengthening the role of the family and providing equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. It was important to strengthen the role of the Commission as the unique venue for constructive dialogue among all groups of States on central social development issues.

98. Despite the economic crisis, the leadership of the Russian Federation had maintained social support for the population at appropriate levels. Massive national social, health-care, education, housing construction and employment projects were going forward as planned, which would result in the Russian Federation joining the ranks of leaders with regard to key quality of life indicators. Support for the family and concern for the socially vulnerable, such as young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities, remained priorities.

99. The United Nations decision to proclaim 2010 the International Year of Youth was welcomed. The World Programme of Action for Youth had provided guidance for Russian youth policy in a variety of areas. The Russian Year of Youth, proclaimed in 2009, had been marked by activities related to realizing the professional and creative potential of young people, inculcating morals, a healthy lifestyle and civic responsibility and spreading ideals of peace and understanding among peoples. Those issues had also served as the basis of a special Youth of Russia programme for the period 2011-2015.

100. In accordance with the recommendations of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the elderly in the Russian Federation received a broad range of assistance. In 2009, pensions had been increased an average of 35 per cent, with similar increases planned for 2010. Poverty among retirees had thus been eliminated. Work to enhance health care for the elderly was ongoing.

101. As part of preparations for ratification by the Russian Federation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, work was under way to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, inclusive education and barrier-free access to all facilities and services throughout the country.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.